

Design of Nanostructured Materials for Advanced Lithium Ion Batteries

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DECLARATION

I, Ying Wang, declare that the work presented in this thesis is original unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged and has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution. This thesis is in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Centre for Clean Energy Technology, Faculty of Science, University of Technology, Sydney.

Ying Wang

Sydney, Australia

December, 2012

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents and my husband. Thank you for all of your love and support.

(Translation from English to Chinese)

致谢

本论文献给我的父亲，母亲和我的丈夫。感谢你们给予我的爱与支持。这份爱我将铭记于心。

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
ABSTRACT	xx
CHAPTER 1 Introduction	1
1.1 General Background	1
1.2 Present Status and Remaining Challenges.....	3
1.3 Importance of Study.....	3
1.4 Outline of Study	5
CHAPTER 2 Literature Review	7
2.1 Rechargeable Batteries	7
2.2 An Introduction of Li-ion Batteries	10
2.2.1 Basic concepts for Li-ion batteries	11
2.2.2 Principles of Li-ion batteries.....	13
2.2.3 Configurations of Li-ion batteries	15
2.3 Cathode Materials for Li-ion Batteries	16
2.3.1 Layered transition metal oxides	17
2.3.2 Spinel LiMn₂O₄ materials	25

2.3.3 Polyanion-based materials	27
2.3.4 Summary.....	41
2.4 Anode Materials for Li-ion Batteries.....	41
2.4.1 Carbon-based anode materials	42
2.4.2 Alloy-based anode materials	44
2.4.3 Transition metal oxides	49
2.4.4 Summary.....	57
2.5 Conclusions	57
CHAPTER 3 Experimental.....	59
3.1 Overview.....	59
3.2 Material Synthetic Techniques.....	59
3.2.1 Solid-state reaction	60
3.2.2 Precipitation method	60
3.2.3 Hydrothermal synthesis	61
3.3 Methods of Characterization.....	63
3.3.1 X-ray powder diffraction (XRPD).....	63
3.3.2 Neutron diffraction (ND)	64
3.3.3 Field-emission scanning electron microscopy (FESEM).....	64
3.3.4 Transmission electron microscopy (TEM)	65
3.3.5 Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) and differential scanning calorimetry (DSC).....	65
3.3.6 Inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (ICP).....	67
3.3.7 Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR).....	67
3.3.8 X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS).....	67

3.3.9 Raman spectroscopy	67
3.4 Cell Fabrication	69
3.4.1 Electrode fabrication	69
3.4.2 Cell assembly	69
3.5 Electrochemical Measurements	70
3.5.1 Cyclic voltammetry	70
3.5.2 Galvanostatic charge-discharge testing	72
3.5.3 Electrochemical impedance spectroscopy	72
CHAPTER 4 High Capacity Spherical Transition Metal Oxides as Cathode Materials for Li-ion Batteries.....	75
4.1 Introduction	75
4.2 Experimental.....	76
4.2.1 Preparation of spherical $\text{Li}[\text{Li}_{0.24}\text{Mn}_{0.55}\text{Co}_{0.14}\text{Ni}_{0.07}]\text{O}_2$	76
4.2.2 Materials characterization	77
4.2.3 Electrochemical testing.....	78
4.3 Results and Discussion	78
4.3.1 Structural characteristics of $\text{Li}[\text{Li}_{0.24}\text{Mn}_{0.55}\text{Co}_{0.14}\text{Ni}_{0.07}]\text{O}_2$	78
4.3.2 Morphology and surface characteristics of the precursor and $\text{Li}[\text{Li}_{0.24}\text{Mn}_{0.55}\text{Co}_{0.14}\text{Ni}_{0.07}]\text{O}_2$	84
4.3.3 Charge-discharge mechanisms of $\text{Li}[\text{Li}_{0.24}\text{Mn}_{0.55}\text{Co}_{0.14}\text{Ni}_{0.07}]\text{O}_2$ cathode materials	87
4.3.4 Electrochemical performance of $\text{Li}[\text{Li}_{0.24}\text{Mn}_{0.55}\text{Co}_{0.14}\text{Ni}_{0.07}]\text{O}_2$ cathode materials	92
4.4 Conclusions	93

CHAPTER 5 Lithium Iron Phosphate as Cathode Material for Li-ion Batteries 95**5.1 Introduction 95****5.2 Experimental..... 97****5.2.1 Material synthesis 97****5.2.2 Physical and structural characterization..... 97****5.2.3 Electrochemical testing..... 98****5.3 Results and Discussion 98****5.3.1 Structural analysis and surface characterization of the as-prepared
LiFePO₄ 98****5.3.2 FESEM and TEM observations of the as-prepared LiFePO₄ 102****5.3.3 Electrochemical properties of the as-prepared LiFePO₄ 104****5.4 Conclusions 106****CHAPTER 6 An Investigation of Carbon Coating on the Electrochemical Performances of Lithium Iron Silicate for Li-ion Batteries 107****6.1 Introduction 107****6.2 Experimental..... 108****6.2.1 Material synthesis 108****6.2.2 Physical characterization and electrochemical testing..... 108****6.3 Results and Discussion 109****6.3.1 Structural analysis of Li₂FeSiO₄/C..... 109****6.3.2 FESEM and TEM observations of Li₂FeSiO₄/C 110****6.3.3 Electrochemical properties of Li₂FeSiO₄/C 112****6.4 Conclusions 115**

CHAPTER 7	Design of Cobalt Iron Oxide as High-performance Anode Material for Li-ion Batteries.....	116
7.1	Part I Synthesis of CoFe_2O_4 Hollow Spheres.....	116
7.1.1	Introduction.....	116
7.1.2	Experimental	117
7.1.3	Results and discussion	119
7.1.4	Conclusions.....	127
7.2	Part II Synthesis of Wintersweet-flower-like $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ Hybrid Material.....	129
7.2.1	Introduction.....	129
7.2.2	Experimental	130
7.2.3	Results and discussion	132
7.2.4	Conclusions.....	147
CHAPTER 8	Conclusions and Outlook	149
8.1	Conclusions	149
8.2	Outlook	150
REFERENCES.....		152
NOMENCLATURE.....		182
LIST OF MATERIALS AND CHEMICALS		186
PUBLICATIONS		188

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Major characteristics and applications of standard rechargeable battery systems	8
Table 2.2	Summary of recent publications on surface-modified over-lithiated layered transition metal oxides	24
Table 2.3	Unit cell parameters reported for polymorphs of Li_2MSiO_4 (M = Fe, Mn or Co)	38
Table 2.4	Experimental potentials (E) and theoretical capacities (Q_s) of selected metal oxides based on conversion reaction	51
Table 4.1	Crystallographic parameters of nominally $\text{Li}[\text{Li}_{0.24}\text{Mn}_{0.55}\text{Ni}_{0.07}\text{Co}_{0.14}]\text{O}_2$ determined from neutron powder diffraction data	80
Table 4.2	Comparison of the electrochemical cell data from relevant recent publications and results from this work	88

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1	Battery histories over the years, showing the main electrode materials used	2
Figure 2.1	Voltages versus capacity for cathode and anode materials for the next generation of rechargeable Li-based cells	12
Figure 2.2	Schematic operating principles of a typical Li-ion battery	14
Figure 2.3	Schematic drawing of various Li-ion battery configurations (a) cylindrical (b) coin (c) prismatic and (d) thin and flat	15
Figure 2.4	Structure of layered LiCoO_2	18
Figure 2.5	(a) Schematic diagram and (b) SEM images of cathode material with Ni-rich core surrounded by concentration-gradient outer layer	20
Figure 2.6	Schematic illustration of porous NCM prepared by modified sol-gel method	22
Figure 2.7	Structure of spinel LiMn_2O_4	26
Figure 2.8	Crystal structure of olivine LiFePO_4 viewed along the (a) <i>b</i> - and (b) <i>c</i> -axis respectively. Yellow tetrahedral, PO_4 ; blue octahedral, FeO_6	28
Figure 2.9	The olivine structure evolution during lithium insertion and extraction	29
Figure 2.10	(a) and (b) Typical HRTEM images of $\text{C-LiFePO}_4/\text{RuO}_2$ nanocomposites; (c) scheme showing the repair of the electronically conducting network of carbon on porous LiFePO_4 by nanometer-sized RuO_2	33

Figure 2.11	Summary of the current synthetic approaches towards the preparation of LiFePO_4	34
Figure 2.12	A voltage profile of pristine $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4$ cycled at 60 °C at C/16 using 1M LiTFSI in EC:DEC 2:1 electrolyte	36
Figure 2.13	Structures of $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4$ polymorphs, showing two orthogonal views. (a) γ_s structure (space group $P2_1/n$); (b) γ_{II} structure ($Pmnb$); (c) β_{II} structure ($Pmn2_1$); and (d) inverse- β_{II} structure ($Pmn2_1$) Key: SiO_4 (blue); FeO_4 (brown); LiO_4 (green); oxygen ions (red)	37
Figure 2.14	Schematic diagram shows the fabrication of MnO_2/CNTs hybrid coaxial nanotube arrays	44
Figure 2.15	(a) Crystal structures and (b) capacities of elements that can alloy with lithium metal. Key: Blue: cubic Si; green: cubic Ge; red: tetragonal Sn; orange: cubic Pb.	45
Figure 2.16	(a) Voltage profiles of the first and half cycles and (b) corresponding phase diagram describing the phases that form during the charge-discharge cycling of a Li/Si cell between 0.005 and 0.9 V.	46
Figure 2.17	Schematic of the preparation of hollow porous Si	47
Figure 2.18	TEM images of yolk-shell Si anode material before and after lithiation, and cycling performance of Si electrode	48
Figure 2.19	(a) and (b) SEM images of 3D porous Ge nanoparticles at different magnifications, showing the pore thickness of 20 nm	49
Figure 2.20	Schematic representations showing the mechanism of	50

	insertion and conversion reactions	
Figure 2.21	Schematic illustration of the programmed fabrication process of metal oxides nanotubes using carbonaceous layered coated MWCNTs templates	52
Figure 2.22	FESEM image of the α -Fe ₂ O ₃ (a) before and (b) after etching	54
Figure 2.23	(a) Bright-field cross-sectional and (b) high-magnification TEM images of SnO ₂ /graphene nanocomposite showing layered structures. The inset in (a) is the corresponding SAED pattern	55
Figure 2.24	(a) and (b) TEM images of mesoporous NiO at different magnifications; (c) TEM image of highly ordered NiO along [100] direction; (d) comparison of rate capabilities of mesoporous NiO and bulk NiO	56
Figure 3.1	Schematic illustrations of the overall procedures involved in this study	59
Figure 3.2	Diagram of the co-precipitation synthesis	61
Figure 3.3	Autoclaves for hydrothermal synthesis	62
Figure 3.4	Basic configuration of testing cells	70
Figure 3.5	Ideal shapes of CV for a reversible, diffusion-controlled reaction	71
Figure 3.6	Typical Nyquist plot of Li-ion batteries	73
Figure 4.1	XRPD patterns of the (a) precursor MCO ₃ and (b) Li[Li _{0.24} Mn _{0.55} Co _{0.14} Ni _{0.07}]O ₂	79
Figure 4.2	The Rietveld-refined fit of the	81

Li[Li_{0.24(1)}Mn_{0.53(1)}Ni_{0.07(1)}Co_{0.14(1)}]O₂ model using NPD data at (a) $\lambda = 2.4107(1)$ Å and (b) $\lambda = 1.5418(1)$ Å. The red crosses represent collected data, the black line through the crosses the calculated Rietveld model, and the purple line below is the difference between the data and calculated model. The vertical black lines are reflection markers for Li[Li_{0.24(1)}Mn_{0.53(1)}Ni_{0.07(1)}Co_{0.14(1)}]O₂. The statistics of the fit for (b) were $R_p = 2.89$ %, $wR_p = 3.92$ %, $\chi^2 = 1.63$ for 20 variables

Figure 4.3 (a) TEM and (b) HRTEM images of **83**

Li[Li_{0.24}Mn_{0.55}Co_{0.14}Ni_{0.07}]O₂, the insert in (b) is the corresponding selected area electron diffraction pattern. The *d*-spacings and SAED pattern of the two phases are indicated (Phase A is Li[Li_{0.24}Mn_{0.55}Co_{0.14}Ni_{0.07}]O₂ and phase B is Li₂MnO₃)

Figure 4.4 FESEM images of (a)-(c) precursor and (d)-(f) **84**

Li[Li_{0.24}Mn_{0.55}Co_{0.14}Ni_{0.07}]O₂ at different magnifications

Figure 4.5 XPS 2p spectra of (a) Ni, (b) Co and (c) Mn ions of the **86**

precursor and Li[Li_{0.24}Mn_{0.55}Co_{0.14}Ni_{0.07}]O₂

Figure 4.6 The first and the second charge-discharge profiles of **87**

Li[Li_{0.24}Mn_{0.55}Co_{0.14}Ni_{0.07}]O₂ cells with two insets showing the differential capacity plot of the initial (a) charge and (b) discharge process

Figure 4.7 XPS 2p spectra of (a) Ni, (b) Co and (c) Mn ions of **91**

Li[Li_{0.24}Mn_{0.55}Co_{0.14}Ni_{0.07}]O₂ electrode at pristine, fully charged and discharged states

- Figure 4.8** (a) Cycling and (b) rate performance of Li[Li_{0.24}Mn_{0.55}Co_{0.14}Ni_{0.07}]O₂ cells in the voltage range of 2.0-4.8 V 92
- Figure 5.1** XRPD patterns of the amorphous FePO₄ and crystallized FePO₄ sintered at different temperatures 99
- Figure 5.2** TG-DSC curves of LiFePO₄ precursor measured at a heating rate of 5 °C min⁻¹ in the Ar flow between RT and 800 °C with a zoom-in area as an insert 100
- Figure 5.3** XRPD patterns of amorphous precursor (a), crystallized LiFePO₄ (b) and Raman spectrum of LiFePO₄ as an inset 101
- Figure 5.4** XPS pattern of LiFePO₄ and a high-resolution XPS Fe2p spectrum as an inset 102
- Figure 5.5** FESEM images of LiFePO₄ after sintered at 650 °C for 15 h at different magnifications 103
- Figure 5.6** TEM images of (a) LiFePO₄; (b) enlarged TEM image of spherical LiFePO₄ particles with a SAED as an inset; (c) zoom-in image of selected-area in (b) with enlarged d-spacing as an inset; (d) selected-area TEM image for LiFePO₄ containing several primary crystallites 104
- Figure 5.7** Electrochemical properties of the as-prepared LiFePO₄ (a) Cyclic voltammetry tests for the first five cycles at the scan rate 0.1 mV s⁻¹ in the potential window 2.5-4.2 V; (b) Cyclic 105

voltammetry tests at different scan rates in the potential window 2.5-4.2 V; (c) Charge-discharge curves at different cycle number at 1 C-rate; (d) Cycle capability at different discharge rates

- Figure 6.1** XRPD patterns of (a) $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4$ and (b) $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4/\text{C}$ and Raman spectrum of $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4/\text{C}$ as an inset **109**
- Figure 6.2** FESEM images of (a) $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4$ and (b) $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4/\text{C}$ **110**
- Figure 6.3** TEM images of $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4/\text{C}$ at different magnifications (a) and (b). The inset in (b) is the zoom-in nanoparticles shown in the rectangular area **111**
- Figure 6.4** (a) Charge-discharge profiles and (b) cyclic performances of $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4$ and $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4/\text{C}$ **113**
- Figure 6.5** EIS plots of $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4$ and $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4/\text{C}$ acquired at 50 % SOC with the equivalent circuit as an inset **114**
- Figure 7.1** XRPD patterns of CoFe_2O_4 nanospheres (samples M6, M12 and M24) and the standard XRPD pattern of the cubic CoFe_2O_4 **119**
- Figure 7.2** FESEM images of the as-prepared CoFe_2O_4 nanospheres (a) M6, (b) and (d) M12, (c) M24 **120**
- Figure 7.3** TEM images of the M12 CoFe_2O_4 sample at different magnifications (a) and (b) are low magnification TEM images. (c) A high magnification TEM view of a CoFe_2O_4 nanosphere. (d) A lattice resolved HRTEM image of a CoFe_2O_4 nanocrystal. The inset in (b) is the corresponding **121**

- selected area electron diffraction patterns
- Figure 7.4** Cyclic voltammograms of the M12 sample electrode at a scan rate of 0.1 mV s^{-1} between 0.01 and 3 V (vs. Li/Li^+) 122
- Figure 7.5** *Ex-situ* XRPD patterns of the CoFe_2O_4 nanosphere electrode (the sample M12) at different discharge and charge states. The diffraction peaks, due to the copper substrate, are indicated by dash lines 124
- Figure 7.6** (a) Charge-discharge profiles of the CoFe_2O_4 nanosphere electrode (the sample M12) in the first, second and 50th cycles. (b) Cycling performance of the M12 electrode between 0.01 and 3 V at 0.1 C 125
- Figure 7.7** Cyclability of the M12 CoFe_2O_4 nanosphere electrode at various C-rates. The discharge profiles of CoFe_2O_4 in the first cycle at each C-rate are shown in the inset 127
- Figure 7.8** XRPD patterns of (a) $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ hybrid material and (b) pristine CoFe_2O_4 . The standard XRPD pattern of the cubic CoFe_2O_4 is presented on the bottom 132
- Figure 7.9** (a) FTIR spectrum and (b) TG curves of $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ hybrid material 134
- Figure 7.10** (a) Low-magnification FESEM image, and (b-d) high-magnification FESEM images of the as-prepared $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ hybrid material 135
- Figure 7.11** FESEM image of the pristine CoFe_2O_4 without adding MWCNTs 135

- Figure 7.12** (a) Low-magnification TEM image, and (b) and (c) high-magnification TEM images of $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ hybrid material. (d) Lattice resolved HR-TEM image of CoFe_2O_4 nanoparticles and MWCNTs. The inset in (b) is an enlarged CoFe_2O_4 nanocluster, indicative of the size of the primary CoFe_2O_4 nanocrystal. The inset in (d) is the SAED pattern of $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ hybrid material. 1 MWCNTs (001), 2 (111), 3(220), 4 (311), 5 (400), 6 (422), 7 (511), 8 (440) **136**
- Figure 7.13** FESEM image of the $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ hybrid material without adding DETA **138**
- Figure 7.14** FESEM image of the $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ hybrid material with increased loading mass of CoFe_2O_4 on MWCNTs **138**
- Figure 7.15** Cyclic voltammograms of the (a) $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ and (b) pristine CoFe_2O_4 electrode at a scan rate of 0.1 mV/s between 0.01 and 3 V (vs. Li/Li^+). **140**
- Figure 7.16** Charge-discharge profiles of (a) pristine MWCNTs, (b) pristine CoFe_2O_4 , and (c) $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ hybrid material for the first, second, and 50th cycles between 0.01 and 3 V. (d) Cycling performances of pristine MWCNTs, CoFe_2O_4 , and $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ electrodes. All cells are cycled at a current density of 45 mAh g⁻¹. The charge capacities are presented as solid symbols, while discharge capacities are shown as hollow symbols **142**
- Figure 7.17** Cyclabilities of $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ hybrid material, pristine **143**

MWCNTs, and pristine CoFe_2O_4 electrodes between 0.01 and 3 V at various current densities. The charge capacities are presented as solid symbols, while discharge capacities are shown as hollow symbols

Figure 7.18 Discharge profiles of the $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ electrode 144
between 0.01 and 3 V at various current densities

Figure 7.19 Cycling performances of the $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ electrode 145
between 0.01 and 3 V at higher current densities

Figure 7.20 AC impedance spectra of pristine CoFe_2O_4 and the 146
 $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ cells. Both cells were subjected to 20
cycles between 0.01-3 V at the current density of 45 mA g^{-1}
and then measured in a frequency range from 10^{-2} Hz to 10^5
Hz. The inset shows the zoom-in the area of the high
frequency range. The intercepts of the high frequency
semicircles on the X axis demonstrate the corresponding
electron transfer resistance

Figure 7.21 FESEM images of the $\text{CoFe}_2\text{O}_4/\text{MWCNTs}$ electrode (a) 147
before and (b) after long-term charge-discharge test

ABSTRACT

Among currently available rechargeable battery systems, Lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries feature high energy density and operating voltage, and long cycle life. Since the 1990s, the development of Li-ion battery technology has been ongoing, owing to the ever-growing demand in portable electronics, electric vehicles (EV), hybrid electric vehicles (HEV) and stationary energy storage devices. Although the improvements in battery technology rely on achievements in electrode materials, separators, electrolytes and external management systems, electrode materials play the most important role as they control the electrochemical reaction and determine the properties of a battery system. Based on extensive literature reviews, the electrochemical performances of electrode materials are size- and morphology-dependent. In this study, several nanostructured materials with specifically designed morphologies were synthesized, characterized, and used as electrode materials for Li-ion battery applications.

First, spherical over-lithiated transition metal oxide was chosen as the high capacity cathode material. Through a modified co-precipitation method, this material exhibited relatively low irreversible capacity loss, high specific capacity, satisfactory cyclability and rate capability. These are suitable for large-scale application.

Secondly, two different carbon coating techniques were designed and applied in the synthesis of LiFePO_4 and $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4$ cathode materials through *in-situ* polymerization and modified ball-milling methods respectively. Carbon-coated LiFePO_4 consists of primary particles (40-50 nm) and agglomerated secondary particles (100-110 nm). Each particle is evenly coated with an amorphous carbon layer, which has a thickness around 3-5 nm. Meanwhile, $\text{Li}_2\text{FeSiO}_4/\text{C}$ nanoparticles

were coated with an amorphous carbon layer, owing to the carbonization of glycolic acid. Both materials exhibited much higher specific capacity, better capacity retention, and better rate capability than their pristine counterparts.

After that, a hydrothermal method was chosen and applied to synthesize hollow-structured CoFe_2O_4 nanospheres and CoFe_2O_4 /multiwalled carbon nanotubes (MWCNTs) hybrid material. The significant improvements in the electrochemical performances of these two materials, including high capacities, excellent capacity retentions and satisfactory rate capabilities could benefit from their unique nano architectures. CoFe_2O_4 demonstrated uniform hollow nanosphere architecture, with an outer diameter of 200-300 nm and the wall thickness of about 100 nm. Hybrid material resembled wintersweet flower “buds on branches”, in which CoFe_2O_4 nanoclusters, consisting of nanocrystals with a size of 5-10 nm, were anchored along carbon nanotubes. Both materials could be a promising high capacity anode material for lithium ion batteries.